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Avon Past



Avon Past

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**AVON ARCHAEOLOGICAL COUNCIL
and AVON LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION**

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EDITORIAL

The compiling of this issue coincided with the arrival of *The Local Historian* containing the article by Philip Riden referred to in Dr. Betty's review of the Blake Committee Report. Local historians are castigated (and probably quite rightly) for their desire to be 'spoonfed' and to have their 'hobby' supported by public funds. We would feel less harshly castigated if it were pointed out that correspondents to the Committee were originally encouragingly asked what could be done for the promotion of local studies, without the rider of financial stringency being added. Wounded pride may be a little salved but it remains the case that however worthy we may feel our enterprise to be and however accustomed we have become to the subsidizing of 'educational' projects, we would now be foolish to expect to be supported by anything other than our own efforts and finance.

It is clearly not the easiest time to start a new publication and *Avon Past* will need your support. This second issue already improves on the first, we hope, and having weathered the initial production difficulties, we can look forward to keeping regularly to our production schedule.

The more cheering aspect of the Blake Committee Report is that it encourages us to suppose that there is a good market for *Avon Past*. It shows how rapidly interest has grown in local history since the war. It is equally certain that there has been a corresponding, if not greater, growth of public interest in archaeology and so perhaps we have not been over-optimistic in embarking on a publishing venture at this time.

Sue Barrance
Georgina Plowright

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

MRS. BETTY EVANS. We were sorry to hear of Mrs. Evans' death shortly before this issue went to press. She had moved to Crewe but formerly had lived in Bedminster Down. Her article was originally sent to the Malago Society who have a number of successful publications as well as the regular magazine *Malago*.

MRS. SYLVIA JOYCE for many years travelled as an R.A.F. wife but now works as a civil servant with the Ministry of Defence in Bath. She was a member of a Bristol University Extra-Mural and W.E.A. documentary research group on Victorian Bath, supervised by Graham Davis. The article originally appeared as one of the collected essays of the group in 1979.

MR. JAMES RUSSELL is a civil servant working in Bristol. He has been involved for some years in amateur archaeological research in the outer suburbs of the City, his main interests being architectural history and the development of the manmade landscape. He is currently treasurer of the Bristol Archaeological Research Group.

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BARRS COURT, OLDLAND

by James Russell

Introduction

The former estate of Barrs Court, the site of a moated manor house once occupied by the Newton Family, lies 7 Km. to the E. of the centre of Bristol and some 400 m. N. of the A431 road from Bristol to Bath. (National Grid Reference ST 65857203). The estate is situated on gently sloping ground overlooked to the N. by a steep-sided ridge (followed by the modern Cock Road) marking the S.E. boundary of the medieval Kingswood Chase; the underlying geology is predominantly pennant sandstone, incorporating several coal-seams.

Until a few years ago the Barrs Court area survived as an enclave of open farmland on the fringes of suburbia. Recently, however, Lovells Homes Ltd. began work on an extensive housing development which will eventually cover most of the former estate, and encroach on the site of the manor house. In view of this threat an archaeological survey of the site was begun in October 1978 by members of the Bristol Archaeological Research Group and the Kingswood Local History Society, supervised at first by Mr. J. Constant and later by the present writer. The first results of this survey, which is involving planning, photography and small-scale excavation, backed up by documentary research, are summarised in the following article.

Historical Outline

(Summarised from H.T. Ellacombe, *'History of the Parish of Bitton'* (1881) pp 80, 93-109.)

Barrs Court and its estates originally comprised the manor of East Hanham. The first documentary references to this manor occur in the mid 14th century, at which time it was held by the De Bitton family. By the mid 15th century the estate was in the possession of Lady Jane Barre, granddaughter of the last of the male De Bittons and wife of Sir John Barre of Rotherwas in Herefordshire. Following the death of Lady Barre in 1485 the property was inherited by Sir Thomas Newton, whose descendants were to occupy it for nearly 200 years. The 16th and early 17th centuries seem to have constituted the golden age of Barrs Court; under the Newtons the manor house was enlarged and beautified and a park was laid out around it. In 1540 the great Tudor antiquary John Leland visited Sir John Newton I at the Court, describing it as a 'fayre olde mannar place of stone'.

In 1661 Sir John Newton II died without issue, shortly after having been made a baronet by Charles II. In order to perpetuate his family name, and also his newly acquired baronetcy, Sir John arranged for his lands and title to be inherited by another, completely unrelated, John Newton, from Hador in Lincolnshire. The new line of Lincolnshire Newtons occupied Barrs Court for a further 80 years; they seem however to have spent less and less time at the house, leaving it for the most part in the care of stewards. We know from documents that extensive repairs were still being made to the mansion as late as 1730. A few years later, however, Sir Michael Newton, who was childless, had the house pulled down. The exact date of the demolition has not yet been determined; it must however have almost certainly occurred by 1740, when a survey of the estate makes no mention of the house, referring only to the ground 'within the moat' (British Museum Add. MSS 18266.).

During the later 18th century a large farm, ruins of which still survive, grew up

around the site of the mansion; this continued as a going concern until the 1920's, when the buildings began to fall into decay, the farmhouse being demolished around 1950.

The Manor House and Park

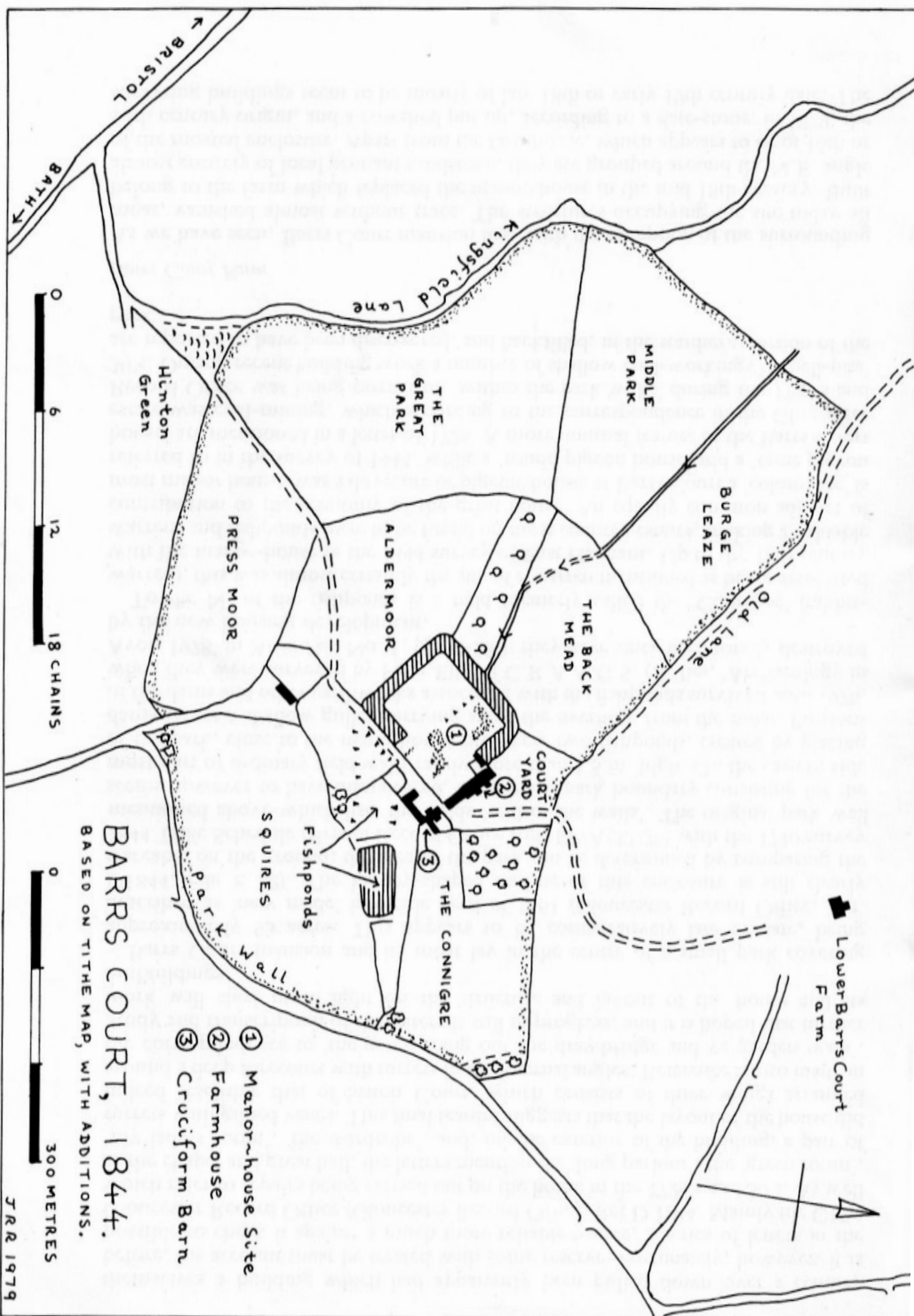
By far the most impressive feature to be seen at Barrs Court today is the large and well-preserved moat partly enclosing the site of the long demolished manor-house. This takes the form of an incomplete rectangle, broken at the N.E. corner by the ruins of Barrs Court Farm; it measures approximately 140 m. by 125 m. externally and varies in width between 12 and 18 m. It is fed chiefly by a small stream, a tributary of the Warmley Brook, which rises near Hanham Mount and enters the moat near the middle of its N.W. side. The exact date of the moat is not known; it is not necessarily medieval and may well have been added by the Newton family during the 16th century. Although there is documentary evidence for a drawbridge across it the moat would have had little defensive potential and must have been intended primarily as an ornament and status symbol; it would also, more prosaically, have been useful for drainage and rubbish disposal.

As a result of Sir Michael Newton's demolition work around 1740, few traces have survived of the mansion within the moat. Of the main structure nothing is now visible except a group of low and ill-defined mounds occupying the northern half of the moated enclosure. In exceptionally dry conditions patches of parched grass appear in parts of this area, indicating the probable positions below ground of spreads of building debris and, in a few places, individual wall-foundations. The southern half of the enclosure seems to be free of both earthworks and parch-marks, and was probably occupied by a garden. As we shall see later, the ruined farmhouse adjoining the manor-house site on the north incorporates many architectural features of late 16th — early 17th century date, and may itself have originated as one of the manor house outbuildings.

In order to get a clearer idea of the appearance and architectural history of Barrs Court one must turn from the rather meagre structural remains of the building to documentary sources. It must be admitted that these too are less extensive than one might hope; no plans, for instance, appear to have survived, while the only known contemporary drawing of the house is a small sketch of doubtful accuracy on a 1670 estate map of Hanham Abbots (Ellacombe, *op. cit.*, Plate 10.). Much useful information can nevertheless be gleaned from other types of record. A 1444 survey of East Hanham, for example, includes a brief description of the house, which then consisted of a great hall, a kitchen and three chambers, together with various outbuildings (Inquest on death of Robert Greyndour (first husband of Lady Jane Barre) 1444. Ellacombe, *op. cit.* pp 317 — 18.).

It is clear that during the 16th and early 17th centuries this comparatively modest residence, a typical small medieval manor house, was substantially enlarged and remodelled. Around 1850 the Rev. H.T. Ellacombe compiled a description of Barrs Court in its final form, based on the statements of 'aged persons living close by' (Ellacombe, *op. cit.* p. 94.). Ellacombe's informants told him that the house had been square, in the style of Siston Court, a large late 16th century mansion situated some 4 Km. to the N.E. Externally the house had square-headed mullioned windows and a series of niches containing 'colossal leaden statues'. Inside there was a chapel 'handsomely adorned', and a splendid entrance hall with a music gallery and an elaborate fire-place. Ellacombe also mentions a drawbridge and a porch or gatehouse decorated with sculptures and inscriptions.

Since none of Ellacombe's 'aged persons' can be expected to have seen for



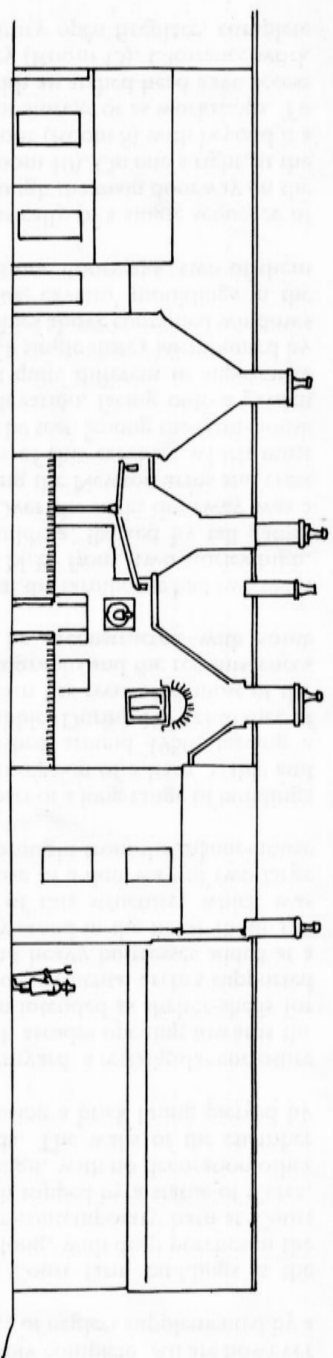
themselves a building which had apparently been pulled down over a century before, his account must be treated with some reserve. Fortunately, however, it is possible to check it against a much more reliable source, a series of letters in the Gloucester Record Office (Gloucester Record Office, Ref D 1844. Mainly file C17.) which refer to repairs being carried out on the house in the 1720's and 30's. As well as the chapel and great hall, the letters mention the 'long parlour', the 'green room', 'my lady's room', 'the wardrobe', and, on the exterior of the building, a pair of turrets with gilded vanes. This final feature suggests that the layout of the house did indeed resemble that of Siston Court, which consists of three wings arranged around a deep forecourt with turrets in the internal angles. Reference is also made in the correspondence to 'the gates going out the drawbridge and ye garden walk'. Study and transcription of the letters is still in progress, and it is hoped that further work will shed more light on the structure and layout of the house and its outbuildings.

Barrs Court mansion and its moat lay in the centre of a small park covering approximately 95 acres. This appears to be comparatively late in date, being described as 'new made' in a title deed of 1661 (Gloucester Record Office, Ref. D1844. File E 22). The kidney-shaped outline of this enclosure is still clearly traceable on the ground; the area of the park can be determined by comparing the 1844 Tithe Schedule (Bristol Record Office Ref. EP/A/32/28) with the 1740 survey mentioned above which lists the fields 'within the walls'. The original park wall seems however to have disappeared, the present park boundary consisting for the most part of ordinary field walls rarely more than 1.5 m. high. On the eastern side of the park, close to the manorhouse site, were two fishponds, created by placing dams across a shallow gulley carrying away the overflow from the moat. Portions of the dams and other earthworks associated with the fishponds survived until 1978, when they were surveyed by Peter Ellis of C.R.A.A.G.S. (R. Iles, 'Archaeology in Avon 1978' in *Avon Past* No. 1, pp 34-35.); they have since been totally destroyed by the new housing development.

To the N. of the fishponds is a field formerly called the 'Connigre' (rabbit-warren); this was almost certainly the site of a warren mentioned as being associated with the manor-house in the 1444 survey of East Hanham. Up to the 18th century warrens and fishponds were to be found on most country estates, making a valuable contribution to the economy of the great house. An equally common adjunct of most manor houses was a dovecote or pigeon-house; at Barrs Court a 'columbare' is referred to in the survey of 1444, while a 'round pigeon house' and a 'tame pigeon house' are mentioned in a letter of 1728. A more unusual feature of the Barrs Court estate was coal-mining, which according to the correspondence in the Gloucester Record Office was being carried on 'within the park walls' during the 1720's and 30's. During recent building work a number of shallow coal-workings or 'bell-pits' are reported to have been discovered, and backfilled, in the southern portion of the park.

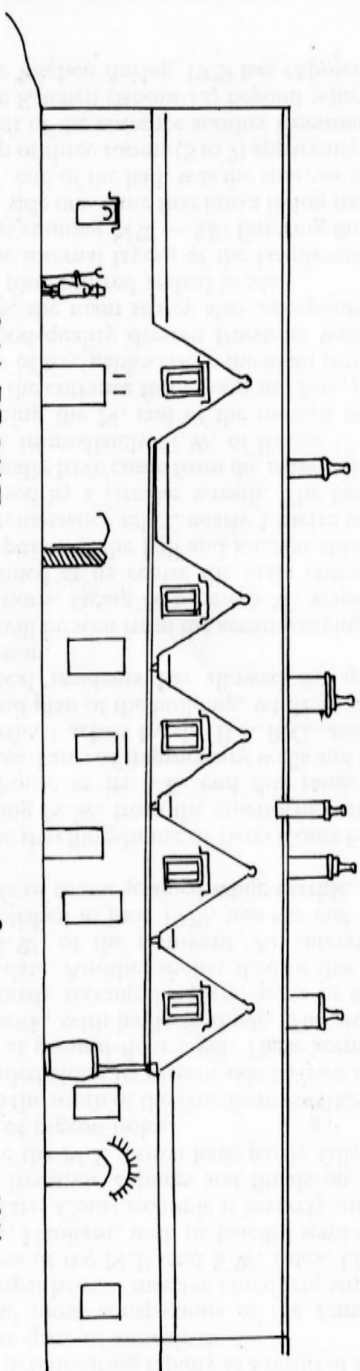
Barrs Court Farm

As we have seen, Barrs Court mansion has, with the exception of the surrounding moat, vanished almost without trace. The structures occupying the site today all belong to the farm which replaced the manor-house in the mid 18th century. Built almost entirely of local pennant sandstone, they are grouped around the N.E. angle of the moated enclosure. Apart from the farmhouse, which appears to be of 16th or 17th century origin, and a cowshed put up, according to a date-stone, in 1879, the surviving buildings seem to be mostly of late 18th or early 19th century date. The



N.E. FRONT

0 10M



S.W. FRONT

0 10M

BARRS COURT FARM

Reconstructed Elevations.

J.R.R. 1980

present condition of the structures varies considerably: some, such as the farmhouse, are totally ruined while others remain reasonably complete. All are however now deteriorating rapidly as a result of at least 30 years of neglect supplemented by a recent spate of vandalism.

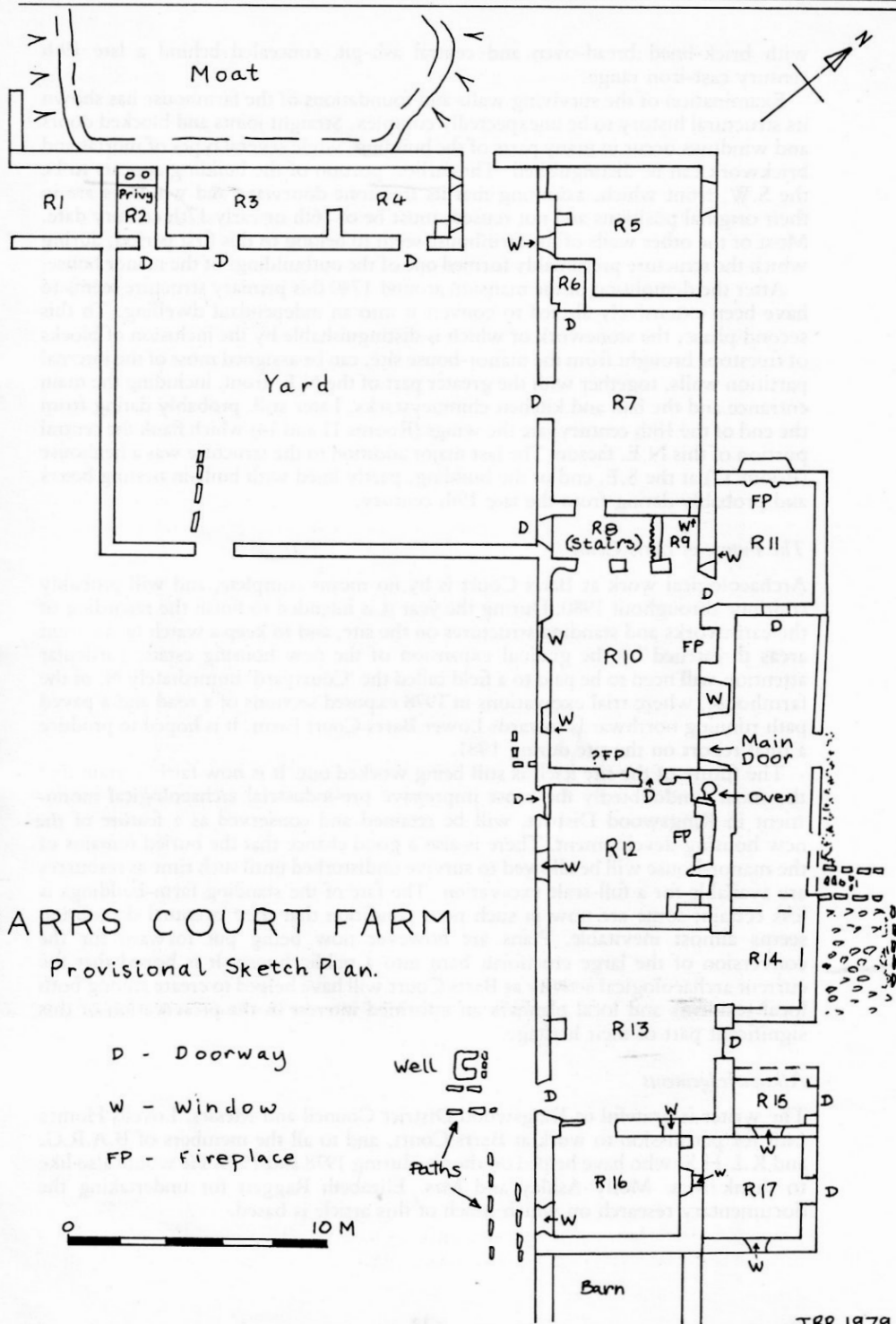
The most conspicuous of the remaining Barrs Court farm buildings is the principal barn, a massive cruciform structure 23 m. long, with deep porches in the centres of the N.E. and S.W. sides. Unlike the near-contemporary barn at Court Farm, Hanham, with its fanciful semi-Gothick porch topped by a statue of Ceres, the Barrs Court example is severely utilitarian in design, with no decoration other than freestone copings and finials on the gable-ends. The walls of the chamber above the N.E. porch have partly fallen away, exposing a brick lining pierced by tiers of pigeon holes.

To the south of the cruciform barn lies the main farmyard, a rectangular enclosure bounded along its eastern side by two structures with arcades opening towards the yard at ground-floor level. These seem to have been intended as shelter-sheds for livestock, with haylofts above. The arcades consist of segmental arches supported on sturdy rectangular piers, some of which have had heavy buttresses added at a later date. Another shelter shed of this type formerly stood in the fields about 150 m. S.W. of the farmyard. An interesting feature of this structure, which was demolished in June 1979, was the inclusion at the base of a doorway of two large blocks of coarse-grained white marble, presumably brought from the manor-house ruins.

The dwelling-house of Barrs Court Farm formed part of a long range of buildings running N.W. from the cruciform barn. With the exception of a barn, stable and hen-house at its S.E. end this range was demolished around 1950, leaving a confused area of fragmentary walls and mounds of rubble. During 1979 clearance of superficial debris by the B.A.R.G. and K.L.H.S. team has recovered most of the ground plan of the building, while study of old photographs and the reminiscences of local residents has allowed its appearance to be reconstructed with some precision.

It will be seen from the accompanying drawings that the farmhouse had two main elevations, facing N.E. and S.W. respectively. The N.E. front, two stories high, contained at its centre the main entrance to the building, flanked by tall gables incorporating the hall and kitchen chimneystacks. Over the main doorway was a fine renaissance relief, nearly 1 metre square, depicting the Newton arms and crest enclosed by a circular wreath. The battered remains of this carving, which must originally have come from the manor-house, can still be seen among the farm-house ruins, immediately N.W. of Room 17. The S.W. elevation, facing onto a garden occupying the N. end of the moated enclosure, was quite different in appearance from the entrance front: long and low, it consisted of a single storey surmounted by a row of five gables. Both the main storey and the gables above contained windows of good-quality dressed freestone with 'casement' or 'cavetto' mouldings in the jambs; the main storey also incorporated three freestone doorways, two of them with four-centred arched heads.

The internal layout of the farmhouse consisted basically of a single sequence of rooms running NW — SE. Entering the building through the main doorway on the N.E. side one came first into a living room or hall (Room 10). On one's right, at the N.W. end of the hall, was the staircase to the upper floor (Room 8) with beyond it a group of three rooms (5 to 7) apparently used either for storage or as workshops. To the left of the entrance another freestone doorway with an arched head gave access to the Kitchen (Room 12) beyond which lay the dairy (Room 13). Clearance work in the kitchen during 1979 has exposed an 18th century open fireplace, complete



BARRS COURT FARM

Provisional Sketch Plan.

D - Doorway

W - Window

FP - Fireplace

with brick-lined bread-oven and central ash-pit, concealed behind a late 19th century cast-iron range.

Examination of the surviving walls and foundations of the farmhouse has shown its structural history to be unexpectedly complex. Straight joints and blocked doors and windows occur in many parts of the building, while several types of mortar and brickwork can be distinguished. The earliest portion of the building appears to be the S.W. front which, assuming that its freestone doorways and windows are in their original positions and not reused, must be of 16th or early 17th century date. Most of the other walls of the farmhouse seem to belong to this first period, during which the structure presumably formed one of the outbuildings of the manor house.

After the demolition of the mansion around 1740 this primary structure seems to have been extensively altered to convert it into an independant dwelling. To this second phase, the stonework of which is distinguishable by the inclusion of blocks of freestone brought from the manor-house site, can be assigned most of the internal partition walls, together with the greater part of the N.E. front, including the main entrance and the hall and kitchen chimneystacks. Later still, probably dating from the end of the 18th century, are the wings (Rooms 11 and 14) which flank the central portion of this N.E. facade. The last major addition to the structure was a henhouse (Room 17) at the S.E. end of the building, partly lined with built-in nesting boxes and probably dating from the late 19th century.

The Future of Barrs Court

Archaeological work at Barrs Court is by no means complete, and will probably continue throughout 1980. During the year it is intended to finish the recording of the earthworks and standing structures on the site, and to keep a watch on adjacent areas threatened by the gradual expansion of the new housing estate; particular attention will need to be paid to a field called the 'Courtyard' immediately N. of the farmhouse, where trial excavations in 1978 exposed sections of a road and a paved path running northwards towards Lower Barrs Court Farm. It is hoped to produce a final report on the site during 1981.

The future of the site itself is still being worked out. It is now fairly certain that the moat, undoubtedly the most impressive pre-industrial archaeological monument in Kingswood District, will be retained and conserved as a feature of the new housing development. There is also a good chance that the buried remains of the manor-house will be allowed to survive undisturbed until such time as resources are available for a full-scale excavation. The fate of the standing farm-buildings is less certain; some are now in such poor condition that their eventual demolition seems almost inevitable. Plans are however now being put forward for the conversion of the large cruciform barn into a public house. It is hoped that the current archaeological activity at Barrs Court will have helped to create among both local residents and local planners an informed interest in the preservation of this significant part of their heritage.

Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Kingswood District Council and Messrs. Lovells Homes Ltd. for permission to work at Barrs Court, and to all the members of B.A.R.G. and K.L.H.S. who have helped on the site during 1978 and 1979. He would also like to thank Mrs. Molly Ashley and Mrs. Elizabeth Raggett for undertaking the documentary research on which much of this article is based.

CORONER'S INQUESTS IN BATH: 1830-1835

by Sylvia Joyce

During the six years from the beginning of 1830 to the end of 1835 there were 80 Coroner's Inquests in Bath. The evidence and verdicts are all written down in faded brown ink in a big leather-bound book kept in Bath City Record Office. The findings as to the causes of death are set out in the tables below, but more interesting than these bare statistics are the individual lives and deaths, and the incidental insights into everyday life at the time given by the witnesses' evidence.

		Natural causes	Accident	Suicide	Murder	Open verdict	Totals
1830	Men	-	6	1	-	-	7)
	Women	1	2	2	-	-	5) 15
	Children	-	2	-	1	-	3)
1831	Men	3	4	3	-	1	11)
	Women	1	-	2	-	-	3) 18
	Children	-	3	-	1	-	4)
1832	Men	1	2	-	1	-	4)
	Women	-	-	-	-	1	1) 9
	Children	-	4	-	-	-	4)
1833	Men	-	4	1	1	2	8)
	Women	-	1	-	-	-	1) 12
	Children	-	3	-	-	-	3)
1834	Men	-	3	4	-	-	7)
	Women	1	-	-	-	-	1) 9
	Children	-	1	-	-	-	1)
1835	Men	4	5	1	-	-	10)
	Women	2	1	-	-	-	3) 17
	Children	-	3	-	-	1	4)
Totals		13	44	14	4	5	47) 14) 80 19)

It is surprising that there were only 80 inquests in the six years. The population of Bath then was about half what it is now and at present there are around 130 inquests a year. On that basis there should have been about 75 a year then, or 450 in the 6-year period instead of 80. Looking at the individual cases they are all working class people or small employers such as printers. There was one surgeon who was killed when his gig was in a collision, but surgeons were less up-market then. The gentry are only mentioned as employers or owners of a runaway horse — clearly, nice people didn't get mixed up in inquests.

Analysis of 44 accidents

Men Women Children

Accidents

at work	12	1	-
Drowning	4	-	8
Road accident	4	-	2
Fire	-	2	2
Suffocation	2	-	2
Fall when drunk	1	1	-
Others	1	-	2

(plus 4 open verdicts on people found drowned)

Analysis of 14 suicides

Men Women

Hanging	5	1
Throat cut	3	1
Shooting	1	-
Poison	-	1
Jumping from window	-	1
Drowning	1	-

As to the form of the inquests — the current Mayor was the ex-officio Coroner and there were always 15 jurors. Most could sign their names though some had to make their mark, as did many more of the witnesses. There were of course no women jurors, and feminists will note that when women appear as deceased or witnesses their marital status is always defined — singlewoman (all one word), widow or wife of . . .

The record of each case begins with a standard introduction, 'The examination of witnesses taken on oath this (date) 18 . . . before me . . . Esq. Mayor and also Coroner of our Sovereign Lord the King in and for the said City touching the death of . . . now lying dead at . . . in the parish of . . . in the said City.' The witnesses' evidence follows, signed by each if they can or if not marked with a cross. At the end of all the evidence is the Coroner's signature.

Then on a new page comes the verdict, also in a standard form — 'An Inquisition indented taken at the Guildhall in the said City on this . . . day of . . . 18 . . . before me . . . Mayor and Coroner upon view of the body of . . . and upon the oaths of (15 jurors' names), good and lawful men of the said City, who being duly sworn and charged to enquire on their oaths on behalf of our Sovereign Lord the King when, where, how and in or after what manner the said . . . came to his death, do say that (followed by a summary of the circumstances and the appropriate verdict). In witness whereof as well the Coroner and Jurors aforesaid have to this Inquisition set their hands and seals the day and year aforesaid' (followed by all the signatures and 16 little dabs of sealing wax.)

The usual forms of words for the different causes of death are —

- accident — 'accidentally, casually and by misfortune did come to his death and not otherwise'.
- natural causes — 'departed this life by the visitation of God in a natural way and not by any violent means whatsoever to the knowledge of the said Jurors'
- suicide — 'being delirious and out of his mind (or being lunatic and distracted) in the manner and by the means aforesaid did kill himself and not otherwise'
- open verdict — 'but how or by what means no evidence doth appear to the Jurors'
- murder — 'feloniously, wilfully and of his malice aforethought did kill and murder against the Peace of our said Lord the King, his Crown and Dignity'

These formulae or slight variations of them are common to all the cases, but the clerks clearly felt honour bound to put as much of the record as they could manage into the same high-flown pseudo legal language. People who don't die at once

'languishingly do live' until they do succumb. A nice example is this on George Farley who killed himself in 1831 - '... with a certain razor made of iron and steel which he the said George Farley then and there had or held in his hand the Throat or Gullet of him the said George Farley did then and there strike stab and penetrate thereby then and there giving unto himself the said George Farley so being delirious and out of his mind with the razor aforesaid in and upon the Throat or Gullet of him the said George Farley one mortal wound of the length of 5 inches and of the depth of one inch and upwards of which said mortal wound he the said George Farley then and there instantly died.' But sometimes the witnesses' own words break through with a very touching naturalness especially where children are giving evidence (which they do on oath, however young).

Medical evidence was usually called — always if people died at the United Hospital (which was already in existence in what is now the Old Technical College in Beau Street). The medical witnesses were mostly surgeons, but occasionally apothecaries or druggists. Post mortems of a kind were done, described as 'when the body was opened'. In the natural causes category there were some odd diagnoses, such as 'spasms' or 'a violent disease of the brain.'

The evidence in the various cases gives quite a lot of insights into what it was like to live in Bath nearly 150 years ago. Perhaps the most striking is the much greater importance of the river in those days. Nowadays we scarcely notice it except to admire the new weir near Pulteney Bridge, but then much of the life and trade of the town happened on it. There were two Quays, Broad Quay and New Quay, near what is now Churchill Bridge and was then the Old Bridge, and they were crammed with barges and boats. The occupation of several witnesses is given as bargeman, boatman or ferryman (a list of all the occupations quoted in the 80 cases is given in the Appendix). People used the river for bathing, washing, watering their gardens, children played by it (and unfortunately often fell into it). Apart from the bridges there were ferries across it, one at the end of Green Park where it seems to have been the thing to do to be ferried across for a pleasant walk up what were then the green fields opposite.

Rather less pleasantly, the river also served as a sewer. For instance, Cornwell Row was a little street looking on to the river at Walcot. From the evidence in an inquest on a dead baby you realise that one lavatory at the bottom of the Row built out over the river served all the houses (of which there were at least eleven from the address of the witness). The baby's body had been thrown down it and was found on the foreshore wrapped in a blue and white handkerchief with one hand sticking out, all covered in filth. And this was just one street of many. Oddly enough the occupation of a witness in another case is given as fisherman — you wonder that any fish survived. Seventeen of the inquests are on people drowned, 8 of them children. Incidentally, bodies taken from the river were mostly taken to the nearest pub to remain there till the inquest ('... lying dead at the Three Blackbirds in Little Stanhope Street'), which must have been jolly for the customers.

An unexpected thing is that the roads seem to have been as dangerous then as now. People are killed in collisions, crushed by carts, knocked down by runaway horses. In an inquest in 1832 on a coachman, there is a vivid picture of bustle and congestion in Southgate Street, when the Bristol to London coach tried to get between a waggon piled with straw and some loaded trucks. The rope fastening the straw caught on part of the coach and jerked the back round, causing the coachman to fall off the box head first on to the ground.

Accidents at work were very frequent (13 of the 80), especially among building workers. Employers didn't bother much about safety — there is one harrowing account of an employee at a cabinet maker's being almost cut in half by a veneer saw

worked by steam.

Drunkenness was very prevalent and played a part in 11 of the cases, even where it was not the direct cause of death. A shoemaker called John Ashman rather touchingly said to his landlady the day before he killed himself, 'I'll put an end to my existence, and all that will be said will be Jack Ashman the drunkard will be gone, and that's all they can say of me.' The wife of another man said that for the last nine days her husband had been constantly drunk every day. Other drunkards fell out of windows, down stairs, into the river or off carts, or succumbed to apoplexy. Apart from drinking the only amusements mentioned are a Gala at Sydney Gardens in 1830 which went on into the small hours, and Mr Bedford's public billiard tables at 17, Milsom Street. There was also the festive occasion in 1834 when workmen in the employ of a Dr. Barnes 'assembled to celebrate his return for which purpose they borrowed an iron cannon' (wherever from?) Unfortunately after it had been fired seven or eight times it burst, and a flying piece of metal killed a boy standing a few yards away.

Fire was an ever-present danger. As well as Ann Davis who will be mentioned later, another small child died 'with his pinafore all in a flame' while his mother had gone to fetch water from the pump. An old woman died when her bedclothes caught fire after the rushlight she kept on the chimney-piece fell on the floor, and a servant's apron caught fire as she was reaching up to take down the strings in which the meat had been roasted. Two young men, brothers, in a cold damp bedroom in December took lighted coal from the kitchen fire and put them in a chafing dish in the bedroom — next morning they were found dead from suffocation.

A surprising thing about the 14 suicides is that there is no mention of any of them leaving a suicide note. Though some were known to have money worries or drink problems or to be depressed, in at least 4 of the cases their friends knew of no reason for the act, which seemed to have been on a sudden impulse. Like Ann Smith, a pauper in the poor house of the parish of St. Michael, who was quarrelling with another woman about a piece of bread and 'appeared in a great passion.' A few minutes later she was found in the next room, hanging by a piece of rope fixed on top of the door. Or there was Benjamin Osmond, a small printer who was 'in easy circumstances but of very irritable disposition. He had lately been trying to improve an instrument for ruling paper which he had not yet been able to bring to a state of perfection, in consequence of which he was much disconcerted. He had been heard to say that the Machine would drive him mad.' A large quantity of work had been brought in which was to have been done by the machine, but when his errand boy arrived at the workshop he found his master hanging from a hook.

The methods used to commit suicide were interesting. The kindly sleeping pill wasn't available then, but the cut throat razor was and was used by 4 of the 14 suicides, one of them a woman (she lived for 36 hours afterwards). Six hanged themselves, there was one shooting, one drowning (though one or two of the open verdict drownings were probably suicides), one woman jumped out of a window. Only one took poison.

The main streets of the town are the same now as then, but many little lanes, courts and rows (with names like Gracious Court) have gone. The small houses in them must have been very crowded, since so many of the witnesses are referred to as living in lodgings. One 'gentleman's servant out of place' paid 1/9 a week rent for his room. Many of the servants, shop workers and apprentices lived in their employers' houses, sharing rooms and sometimes even beds. One servant's bed was in the hall of a house in Johnstone Street; he was taken there after falling into the area off the parlour window sill while he was cleaning the windows.

General facts are interesting but it is the individual cases — these little slices of life

preserved for ever at their moment of crisis in these faded pages — which really fascinate. You keep wanting to know more. What was the story of the unknown girl aged about 22 found floating in the river near Norfolk Crescent fully dressed with her hand with a handkerchief in it on her breast and her straw bonnet under her arm? They thought she had been in the water for about two days, she wasn't pregnant, there were no marks of violence on her and in spite of enquiries she was never identified. Or what became of the crippled bedridden wife of David Hitchins — she called out to the woman in the next room 'For God's sake come to him, he's in a fit', but he was already dead. She was helpless and there was no widow's pension then.

Some of the cases seem particularly touching. I can never pass 5, New Bond Street now without thinking of poor Clarissa Morling who lived there above her husband's saddler's shop and who was depressed after her baby died. So one July evening in 1831 she slipped out to the druggist's in Cheap Street and asked for some oxalic acid 'to clean straw bonnets with'. Ten minutes after she got home again the servant girl answered the bedroom bell and found her sitting on a chair vomiting into a chamber pot. She asked the girl to fetch, not her husband from the shop downstairs, but the woman who lived next door, and it was this neighbour who stayed with her until she died a little later. What was the story of that marriage?

Anyone who has had children must feel the awful dilemma of Ann Davis who because she was a widow and had to earn was out all day about the town selling meat. She had one little girl of 8 also called Ann, and to keep her from danger in the streets she used to leave her locked in the attic room at Southgate Street where they lodged. Little Ann had been warned to be careful of the fire, but one cold November day the landlady heard screams and rushed to find her standing with her dress all on fire. The poor mother was found, and stayed with her in the United Hospital until she died a few days later. She said 'My daughter was perfectly sensible until she died and told me she was playing with her toys near the fender.'

There was a little boy too, Frederick Ponsonby Cogswell, who was playing by the river in Grove Street with his friend Robert Hill. He took off his stockings to wash his feet in the river (in that water!) and fell in. Robert's artless evidence is very touching. He says his friend was called Sponce (and you wonder why? But of course — a nickname from his rather grand second name of Ponsonby). Robert, childlike, did not call for help in Grove Street, but trotted all the way home to Trim Street to tell his mother. She in turn told Sponce's mother and they all went back and 'he shewed her the place where Sponce had tumbled in'. But it was too late then.

Or what about John Forder who lived in Millers Court near the river? His neighbour giving evidence said he heard cries for help, and going to the bottom of the Court saw someone clinging to a post in the river nearly on the opposite side. While he, prudent man, was standing considering Forder came from behind, ran under his outstretched arm and rushed down the steps into the river. But 'the current was at that time running exceedingly strong' and after he had swum about 10 yards he vanished. His body was found three days later at the bottom of South Parade. Perhaps we are the first since the people who knew him died to salute across the years that instinctive unhesitating sacrifice for a stranger.

An exotic name among the plain English ones is that of Tomazo Rodriguez da Sa, a native of Oporto, who lodged in two adjoining attic rooms at 27, Kingsmead Terrace. He had a Portuguese friend called da Silva, who found him very depressed one afternoon in July 1831. About 4 o'clock he suddenly left his friend reading the newspaper and went into the adjoining bedroom, locking the door. When da Silva forced the door, da Sa was leaning over the wash basin bleeding, having cut his throat. Da Silva very naturally but very uselessly asked him what he had done it for,

but you can't talk much with a cut throat and he died fifteen minutes later without having been able to utter a word.

Of the four murders, two were infanticides by unknown persons, and it is easy to imagine the desperate friendless girls behind those two sad little deaths. The third would probably nowadays be considered manslaughter. John Matthews was a servant of a Mr. Williams and was told by his master to guard his garden at South Stoke. About two in the morning he heard his dog growl and saw a man picking fruit from trees against the wall. Matthews seized the man by his collar and said 'Come with me.' But the thief (whose name was Abraham Vincent) pulled away and started to run. When Matthews warned 'Stop or I'll shoot' the man said, 'You may shoot and be damned' and kept running. So Matthews did shoot and the man collapsed on the ground. In his evidence Matthews said that as he went towards him the man brandished a stick, so he hit him with the butt end of the gun. Then he raised the alarm and there was great excitement in the quiet village night. The Constable of South Stoke was woken up and told to bring what are called his handbolts, and he and various locals assembled round the prostrate Vincent. He kept saying 'Lord have mercy — get me a stone to put my head on — let me go', but they thought he was shamming. Finally they carried him on a gate to the constable's stable and locked him in for the rest of the night. In the morning the constable realised that he really was badly hurt and took him to the United Hospital where he died almost at once of a fractured skull from the blow with the butt of the gun. The verdict was that the unfortunate Matthews, who after all was only doing his job even if rather over-zealously, 'not having the fear of God before his eyes but moved and seduced by the instigation of the Devil . . . feloniously, wilfully and of his malice aforethought did Kill and Murder against the Peace of our said Lord the King his Crown and Dignity.'

The other murder actually happened in the George Inn at Wells, though the victim, a licensed hawker called William Lane, didn't die till he got back to Bath. The main witness was in the George about midday when a man came in with a basket of nuts which he offered for sale (from which he is referred to throughout the evidence as the Nutman). Some other men in the pub called the Nutman an informer, whereupon Lane said, 'You were on the same game last Saturday at the Red Lion' and hit him in the face. The Nutman went out saying he would get a summons. In the middle of the afternoon Lane and the witness were still drinking when the Nutman came back and 'ground his teeth at the deceased' who hit him again and said, 'Will you fight me now?'. The Nutman did not return the blow, but three minutes later suddenly snatched the poker from the grate and hit Lane; on the top of his head as he sat smoking. He fell senseless and bleeding, but the Nutman sat down and started singing. He was taken into custody to the Watch house while his victim was removed to bed. Next day Lane told the witness that his head pained him but he didn't wish to make any complaint against the Nutman as 'it was all a drunken job.' He got up and went back to Bath, but a few days later he collapsed and died of a fractured skull.

Between 1830 and 1835 the forces of reaction and liberalism were contending all over Europe; in England after long political controversy the Reform Bill was finally passed in 1832, opening the way to democracy and eventual universal suffrage. Two years after the last of these inquests Queen Victoria was to begin her long reign which would end with the country in an unparalleled position of imperial greatness. But no issues from the wider world are reflected in these records. As always, ordinary people were getting on with their daily lives as best they could, coping with the familiar worries about money, jobs, health, children. 'The roaring generations flit and fade', but over the gulf of years we can recognise our own

troubles, and people just like those we know. Perhaps in another 150 years someone will be concerned and sorry about our deaths too.

Source — Record of Coroner's Inquests kept in the City Record Office, Guildhall, Bath.

APPENDIX

LIST OF OCCUPATIONS MENTIONED IN EVIDENCE

Innkeeper/landlord	Lodging house keeper	Outdoor porter
Bargeman	Boatman	Ferryman
Fisherman	Licensed chairman	Licensed hawkler
Surgeon	Apothecary	Druggist
Nurse	Apprentice	Journeyman
Labourer	Servant	Laundress
Surveyor	Writing clerk (for attorney-at-law)	
Coachman	Waggoner	Horsekeeper
Ostler	Stableman	Farrier
Postboy	Saddler	Waiter
Mayor's officer	Parish officer	Night police
Constable	Watchman	Tythingman
Turnpike keeper	Engineer	Meat seller
Errand boy	Printer	Glass cutter
Milkman	Painter	Dyer
Ironmonger	Shoemaker	Grocer
Plasterer	Cordwainer	Farmer
Quarryman		

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MEMORIES OF CLIFTON AND HOTWELLS: 1889-1911

by Mrs. Betty Evans

In the borders of the 1673 plan of Bristol by Jacobus Millard (Bristol Museum), you will find a little picture of Giant Vincent set against a landscape of the Avon Gorge. In the background is a cottage tucked in under St. Vincent's Rocks which means that a dwelling had stood there for many years. It is doubtful if the cottage is the same as the one in which my mother grew up, but it is almost certainly in the same position. My mother, Elsie Bishop, was born in Phipps Street, Ashton Gate, but her family moved to the Gorge Cottage soon after and she always regarded it as her childhood home. In 1931-32 I was, for a long time, paralysed by 'polio', and the memories I now record are the ones with which she used to keep me amused during long days of helplessness.

She was born in 1885, and her birth certificate, which I still possess, shows that her father was Edward Bishop and her mother Eliza Jane Bishop (nee Chidgey). My grandparents were country people, Eliza was brought up at Yatton in a row of cottages near the Parish Church. She died in 1950, aged 96, and is buried near the main door of that same church. Edward came from Congresbury, and I believe Bishops still farm there today. Like many others, they came to Bristol in search of work; my mother was the fourth of their six daughters.

At that time the Portway did not exist, the Hotwell road ran beside the river and then cut up to the top of the Downs via the Bridge Valley Road. Beyond that point a towpath ran beside the river to Shirehampton. The old 'Port & Pier' railway also hugged the foot of the Gorge on its way from Sneyd Park junction to Hotwells, a distance of 1¼ miles.

Life at the cottage must have been quite crowded, with the parents, six girls, and a young man lodger. His name was George Tudor and he later married the second daughter, Florence. Later still, there was another baby, an adopted daughter, who is now a very old lady living at Burnham-on-Sea. The girls slept three to a double bed, two of which stood in the attics. I have a large patchwork quilt, I believe from that time; it is all made in red and white hexagons about two inches across. One wonders how many worn out petticoats and aprons went into such an article. It must have taken months of work and precise patterning.

Edward Bishop worked as a ganger on the railway at one time and later as a labourer with the Bristol Docks Company — George Tudor also worked at the Docks. Money was never plentiful, and so all methods were used to bolster the family income. There was quite a large piece of land under the Gorge and it was natural for country people to use this as a smallholding. Two or three pigs and a number of fowls devoured household scraps and acorns gathered on the Downs. They supplied eggs, meat and bacon for the family table. The garden was worked both for vegetables and flowers. It was a lonely spot and a dog was a useful guard, this was a large black Labrador known as 'Nell'. There was also at least one cat, probably more. This one, a tabby, was known as 'Sprouts' due to a short very stumpy tail. Sprouts had risked one of his nine lives crossing the railway and leaving things a little late, had left the other half of his tail under the engine wheels!

There was no help if the breadwinner was sick or could not work because of weather conditions and life could be precarious. So even the garden flowers were not grown just for fun. Every Saturday morning in summer they were cut early and made up into typical 'country garden' bunches. Then they were put into a big wash basket and my mother with one of the older girls carried them to the 'better' houses of Hotwells and Clifton. The girls were well-known and greeted as the 'Little Bishops' or the 'Bishop Girls' by their regular patrons.

All the family attended the Church of England school attached to Christchurch, Clifton, and situated then at the back of the church. Basic reading, writing, arithmetic, plain sewing, scripture and the Church of England catechism were taught, and the regime was as strict as most in late Victorian schools. On Saints Days they had to attend worship at Christchurch and although a life-long Methodist, my mother never quite lost the love of the Anglican liturgy which she then acquired.

But even under strict discipline there could be fun. The bone above the top joint in the little finger of my mother's left hand was missing. Instead the flesh bent over to make a little knob on the inside. On this knob Elsie used to ink in a face and add a paper frill skirt to form a doll. This little 'dolly' was a source of amusement to the other girls and when the giggles became obvious and the teacher challenged — 'Elsie Bishop, what have you there?' it was the work of a moment to whip off the 'skirt' and push it under the desk. Then bringing her hands up, palms down to hide the 'face', she would say innocently enough, 'Nothing, Miss'.

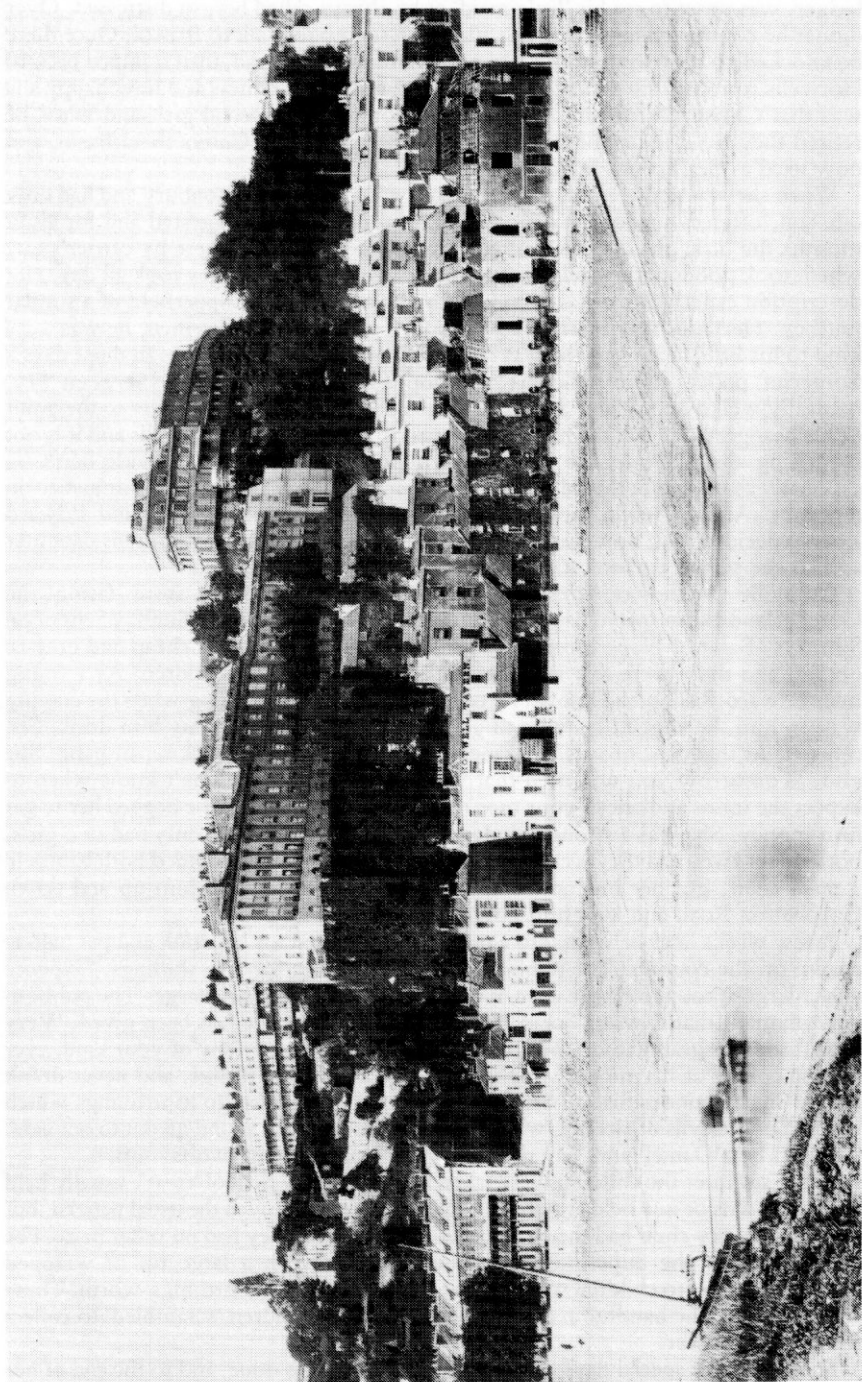
All through the year, the sisters walked up the zig-zag or through 'Hazelwood' to the Promenade and then across Clifton Down to the school. Often in hot weather making a detour to Proctor's Fountain at the top of Bridge Valley Road for a drink of water. Again there was fun on these walks, snowballs in winter; a quick slither down the 'Donkey slide' near the Suspension Bridge; an activity still beloved by many a Bristol youngster. Games of 'touch' and 'hide & seek' around the bushes and in autumn gathering blackberries and hazelnuts.

At home, when the pigs were grown, the slaughterman came. My mother hated those days and would run up to the attic bedroom and push her head under the bed clothes to stifle the sound of squealing, but I believe she ate the pork and bacon so provided, all the same.

Water for washing came from a well in the garden, but this was not pure enough to drink. The third daughter, Alice, once suffered a terrible rash over hands and face. The doctor was consulted and diagnosed lime-burning. There had been a drought and the water in the well had dropped so low that the sludge which collected at the bottom had been stirred up and Alice having sensitive skin, had suffered. Drinking water had to be fetched in a bucket or large jug from a spring in the rocks. This rose in the wall of the railway tunnel. Two girls always went on the errand, one to fill the bucket, the other to stand guard at the tunnel entrance and give warning of any approaching train.

My mother was friendly with the stationmaster's daughter who was about her own age. They lived at the old 'Port & Pier' station a little further up the Gorge towards Bristol. A small engine and a couple of carriages were kept here ready for use. The two little girls used to take their dolls into the carriages, no corridor, of course, to play 'house'. They were so occupied one day when the little train suddenly steamed away. Luckily the railway child kept her head saying, 'It's alright, they will only be going to fill up the engine's water tank, don't try to get out'. So it proved, and some minutes later the train reversed back into the station and it is doubtful if the staff ever knew about their two illicit passengers.

Christmas was a happy time. The younger children hung their stockings around the kitchen fireplace and woke to find them filled with nuts, an orange and apple, sugar mice and a few small toys. The girls made presents for each other sewing dolls clothes and pen-wipers, an article unknown in our ball-point days. Usually each child had one larger gift. One year my mother had a doll, it's head being made of wax. All the girls trooped off to the Christmas morning service leaving dolly sitting in the arm chair. Alas, the fire was too hot and Elsie returned to find that her doll's face had melted. She was heart-broken and cried so much that George, the young



lodger, was upset to see his 'little maid' as he always called her, so distressed. Over dinner he comforted her and in the afternoon set out to walk to Bristol. Once there he knocked up the owner of a toyshop and bought a new head, then tramped back to Hotwells to repair the damage. Elsie never forgot the kindness and how happy she was that Christmas tea-time. He married Florence, the second girl, and when he retired they lived in one of the little docks cottages facing Cumberland Basin, and now used as Sea Scout Headquarters.

When she was about eight, my great aunt who lived at Glastonbury and had only one son, offered to adopt my mother. A trial period was suggested and for eight months the little girl lived at her aunt's home. She travelled there by carrier's cart which took goods and parcels around the villages and the journey took all day. Her description exactly fitted the one given in Dickens' *David Copperfield* of a similar journey. Her aunt was married to Sergeant Fry the local policeman; he was very kind to his little niece, but she was rather shy of the big man in blue. In those days a Somerset police officer's helmet was topped by a silver spike. Sergeant Fry, naturally well over six foot and broad in proportion, topped seven feet to the point of his headgear. He had the measure of most of the local ne'er-do-wells and it is not surprising that they tended to give their police-sergeant a very wide berth — especially as no one bothered much if he sometimes dealt out a little swift justice on the spot. After a while, however, Elsie went back home visiting and Edward Bishop decided that, however hard the times, he could not do without his daughter and so she stayed at the cottage in the Gorge.

Grenville Methodist Chapel, now Robinson's Furniture store facing the Cumberland Basin, played a great part in their lives. Service and Sunday School on Sundays, Band of Hope meetings during the week. Drink was cheap and easy to obtain, and there were few laws governing its sale, even to children. As a young man Edward Bishop had known its power. One summer evening when the craving was on him, he begged his wife to go and pawn his watch to buy him drink. She refused. At that time he was working in charge of a railway truck repair gang. She said, 'Tomorrow you will need that watch. Without it you won't know when to expect the trains and one of your men might get killed', but still he begged her to get him money. She was a strong-minded woman and at that time only had two girls, both under two, and they were still living at Ashton Gate. She loaded both babies in a push chair, got her husband into his coat and walked with him up and down Coronation Road and kept him going until his craving passed.

A few weeks later he went into a public-house, asked for his drink and put half-a-crown on the counter. The publican gave him change for two shillings. Sixpence was a large amount in those days and Edward challenged the charge. The publican was adamant that it was a florin, and not half-a-crown, he had been given. 'Very well', said my grandfather, 'but that is the last time you, or any of your kind, ever see the colour of my money'. He walked out, signed the pledge, and never drank again. Small wonder that all his family were encouraged to go to meetings which warned of the evils of alcohol, where they sang songs which sound quaint to our ears. 'Dare to be a Daniel' and 'My drink is water bright' being two favourites.

In the summer the children were taken for the Sunday School 'treat', usually held on the Downs or in a field at Ashton. Races and a tea followed the usual pattern, but at the end every child had the chance of a few sweets if they had no other prize. For Mr. Prideaux, the Superintendent would appear, with a large tin of wrapped sweets, a marvel to children who bought their sweets by the farthings-worth. These were flung by the handful in all directions while the children 'scrambled' to collect the sugary shower.

Sundays were special days, no unnecessary work was done, and to the end of her

life in 1963, my mother would try never to knit or sew on a Sunday.

The Suspension Bridge itself was part of the backdrop of their lives, and on windy nights the great bridge would swing and its creaks and groans could be clearly heard in the little cottage far beneath. My mother claimed to be able to recall her mother telling her to get up one morning, and saying that a man had thrown his two children from the Bridge. This was the famous incident when the girls' wide skirts acted as parachutes and saved their lives.

The cottage itself had the reputation of being haunted, and certainly sometimes you could hear a sound of a galloping horse if you were in the kitchen. This is a phenomenon which is known in many places (Wookey Hole caves being one) and is probably due to air being trapped in rock recesses by rising water and then 'bubbling' out. The nearness of the river Avon with its rise and fall would account for this. Hotwells, of course, had been a popular spa, though by now its fame had passed. However, there was an alcove in the rocks where the spa water was still available. This was sold at a penny a glass by a vendor known as Johnny Pumpwater.

The Rocks Railway provided cheap and easy transport from Hotwell Road to Clifton, near the old Grand Spa Hotel. The track rose steeply through a tunnel cut through the rock. The carriage was raised by a counter balance which was filled with water at the top to make it heavy enough to slide to the bottom of the track. I was taken on this ride when a small child, but was always rather nervous. I had a child's fear that old Giant Vincent might be lurking somewhere in that strange tunnel. I believe the Rocks Railway closed about 1936.

At twelve, Elsie left school, which was the usual age in those days. She went into service, and also tried hospital and factory work, going to Wills' in 1900. She worked at one time at the old Clift House Hospital and also at Ham Green which took over from it. Here she met Miss Burrows, a few years older, who was to become a life-long friend. Clift House stood somewhere near the site of the present bonded warehouse near the Ashton end of Clift House Road. It also was reputed to be haunted. In the basement was a corridor leading past two kitchens to a little china pantry with no other exit. A tall nurse in a blue striped dress, full length, and starched apron and high starched cap was supposed to walk down this corridor and disappear after entering the china closet.

In 1900 Elsie met my father for the first time. They were both just 15, but more of that later. My father's family were also of Bristol and had a sea-faring background. His name was Smith and for five generations the family had been in the trading and sea-faring life of Bristol. The earliest sailor Smith we know of was the master of a trading vessel in 1799. This is the hallmark of a little silver compass in the shape of a ship's steering wheel that he always wore on his watch chain. Shipwreck was an ever present danger, and he always said that if he were cast adrift in an open boat, a reliable compass, no matter how tiny, would enable him to navigate and give himself and his men a fighting chance of life. A grandfather clock is also a family possession that probably belonged to him. An indistinct date starting 17 . . is scratched on the inside of the dial plate. We believe it may well have been made in Bedminster. It is usually the property of the eldest son, and is still in the Smith family and seems likely to travel down another two generations yet.

His son became the master of one of the big tea-clippers trading to India and the China seas, and was often away from home for two years at a time. It was probably about 1815 that this young officer met and fell in love with the daughter of one of the well-to-do families of Clifton. At this time, this was the fashionable merchants quarter, and it is possible that he had some business contact with her father. We do not know her name, but tradition says that she loved him well enough

to make a runaway marriage, and in spite of long separations, they were a devoted couple. These were the days before gummed envelopes, when postal services were very uncertain. Often their letters would lie for months in foreign shipping offices before they could be claimed. They hated the idea that their letters could be opened and read by anyone who chose to pry, so they had a pair of seals made. It was a punishable offence to break a wax seal and they could tell if a letter had been tampered with. This was all that was known when the pair of seals came into my possession in 1963. I asked if Bristol Museum could tell me any more about my heirlooms. They identified them as a pair of fob seals in gilt on brass. Both circulating in 1815 (In those days ladies wore finer versions of a man's watch and chain). The man's seal having an anchor in the metal holder and the head of Lord Nelson carved to make the impression. The cutting of the head is so fine that although the whole seal is about 1 inch across, the wax impression even shows up the ribbon tying Lord Nelson's pigtail. The lady's seal is about half the size and the square stone bears the head of William Shakespeare. The lady's choice of 'The Bard' for her seal suggests a woman of some education. Since the higher education of girls was by no means common in those days, it seems to confirm that she was of a good family.

So the evidence of the two little seals tends to bear out the old family story. A glass cake dish (believed to be a wedding gift) and a willow pattern bowl also survive from their home. There is little else known of this couple, though we believe they had a son, Henry, who also went to sea for many years, though we do not know his rank. Later he chose to leave the high seas and we think spent some time as a longshoreman sailing the trows which plied up and down the Severn, carrying goods from the Port of Bristol up to Stourport for use in the Midlands. He in turn had two daughters, Lilly and Annie, and one them a son, christened Walter Henry, who was my grandfather. He was born in 1862 and again went to sea at an early age, but did not like the life so came ashore to start an apprenticeship in foundry mould making.

One tale of his early days as a cabin boy survives. The coaster in which he served anchored one Christmas Eve in the King Road. The master and most of the crew headed for their homes in Bristol, but the first mate and the cabin boy were ordered to stay aboard and take charge of the ship and cargo. Very disgruntled, these two decided upon their own celebration. Raiding the stores they concocted a large plum pudding, but the problem was to know how to boil it for they had no cloth or basin. Christmas morning brought inspiration, the pillow slip was removed from the Captain's cabin, the pudding tied up inside and the whole thing dumped into a big pan of boiling water. Unfortunately, the cabin boy was not so alert as he might have been, and soon smoke arising from the galley proclaimed that the pot had boiled dry. However, the pudding was prised from the pot, the burnt parts cut away and the rest made up for a somewhat sketchy Christmas dinner, no doubt laced with some brandy or rum. Next day the problem of the burnt pillow slip arose, and the cabin boy was despatched post haste to Bristol to replace the article. He beat the returning Captain by a short head and apparently the officer never discovered why his pillow was so freshly laundered, perhaps he put it down to Christmas goodwill!

Walter Henry married in about 1883/4 and also became a Methodist local preacher at about the same time. This meant that on top of a long week's work, he often walked out to take services at country chapels at the weekend. At this time he and his young wife lived in the Clifton area. One wild March night in 1885 he walked to Failand chapel to conduct worship. Starting for home after service, he found it snowing heavily and by the time he had struggled to the main Portishead-Bristol road the wind was whipping the snow to a whirling blizzard. He pushed on

to Abbots Leigh and there called in at the George Inn to ask if anyone was going into Bristol. The men in the bar laughed and advised him to come in and stay the night, as he could never hope to reach the city under such conditions but young Walter had special reasons for wishing to reach home and he decided to push on. The drifts were already deep and after about half-a-mile where the road rises a little, he could not keep his feet. He slumped under the wall of the Greville Smyth estate, trying to get his breath. How long he was there before he became conscious of someone shaking his shoulder, he had no idea, but he opened his eyes to a blur of yellow light and a voice saying 'Come on, you can't go to sleep here'. Fortunately for him, a customer at the 'George' also had urgent business in Bristol and borrowing a lantern from the licensee, had followed the young preacher. He got my grandfather to his feet and together they struggled on. At last they reached the Suspension Bridge, there was no toll-keeper in sight. The Bridge itself was swinging so wildly that it was impossible to stand. The two men went down on their hands and knees and crawled across, sheltering under the roadway parapet. Reaching the Bristol side they were greeted by the astonished toll-keeper asking, 'Good God, where have you come from?'. When told 'Across the bridge', he said, 'Blimey, we fetched our Somerset men across two hours ago, we thought the bridge was going to fall'. At last Walter reached home and found his anxiety had been well-founded. A few hours later his eldest son, Walter Sydney Smith entered the world, it was March 12th. And the Bridge? Next day it was found that at least eighteen of the thick iron suspension rods holding the roadway to the chains had snapped, and there was much other damage.

A further girl and boy were born to the family, and then they moved to Liverpool in about 1889 following employment opportunities. Walter Henry Smith returned to Bristol with his two sons in 1899, after the deaths within nine months of each other, of his daughter and young wife. It was shortly after this in 1900 that the eldest boy, Walter Sydney became acquainted with Elsie Bishop.

The chapels and churches of Hotwells were centres of community life and incidentally one mission was led by the father of Miss Abigail Dodds who has done so much for Bristol's musical life. Grenville Methodist Church was a centre of social life for a number of young people. The two Smith boys probably went there because their Aunt Lily was a Sunday School teacher for many years. Incidentally, the younger boy, Fred, became a well-known Scoutleader at Ebenezer Methodist Church in Back Lanes, between the two wars, and his wife received the Thanks Badge of the Scout movement for her work. His son and grandson still work in the Sea Scout movement today. It was at the chapel that Walter met Elsie Bishop; they were at that time 15 years old and it was to be another ten years before they would be able to marry.

One of the group of young people was later to become one of Bristol's first policewomen. I believe her name was Lily Machin, — I can certainly recall her chatting to my parents in the Hotwell Road in about 1936. She wore a navy serge costume with silver buttons and a silver whistle chain to her top pocket; and a round mushroom-shaped hard navy hat.

The Downs, of course, were favourite places for the young people, not least those who were 'walking out'. My maternal grandmother having the welfare of six daughters to consider, was somewhat stern in her dealings. Picture hats trimmed with flowers were regular 'Sunday best' wear. One Sunday evening, my mother having been walking on a narrow Downs path, was dismayed to discover the flowers were missing from her straw hat. Afraid to go home and face her mother's questions. Walter and Elsie picked the pink dog-roses which blossomed in abundance and concocted a new wreath for the hat. She got into the cottage and hid

the offending headgear upstairs without detection. The hat was re-trimmed with the help of her eldest sister, at that time a trained milliner, and worn the next Sunday and I think my grandmother never discovered the trick.

The old horse trams used to run from the bottom of Bridge Valley Road to the Centre via College Green. From the Centre the gradient was steep and extra trace horses were needed to pull the heavy trams up this hill. In slippery weather sacks or old rags were often tied around the horses hooves to give them better footing. Some of the early electric trams also covered this route and Walter took Elsie on one of these trips. Many years later they could both recall how frightened she was by being moved without the aid of horses.

Once they went on a Campbell's steamer trip to Clevedon. When it was time to return the ship was late. When she limped into the pier rumours of an accident flew. One of the boilers in the engine room had burst and my mother could recall seeing the engine room staff brought ashore on stretchers. They had been badly scalded and were rushed to Clevedon Cottage Hospital for treatment.

Sometime about 1904/5 the Bishop family left the Gorge cottage and moved to a house in the rank facing the river and known as St. Vincents Parade. I think this must have been at the end of the rank for it had quite a sizeable garden. My grandmother, as usual never short of ideas, opened a small tea-garden, and the girls had to help with the serving. It was quite a successful venture especially at holiday times. People strolling at tide times, watching the then busy river traffic would call. Rownham Ferry brought people from the Clange side and visitors to the Bridge came down the zig-zag and stopped to take tea before making their way back to Bristol.

The third sister, Alice, married a Mr. Henry Higgins. He was the proud possessor of a phonograph. During the courting period it was quite usual for the girls and their 'young gentlemen' friends to gather in the parlour to listen to this wonder. Many of the cylinders were popular numbers of the times, including the smash hit — 'Down at the Old Bull & Bush'. Engagements tended to be long, wages were low and getting even a small home together was quite difficult. Elsie and Walter were officially engaged for five years. At last the chance came to buy furniture from an acquaintance who was emigrating to Canada. A lot of the pieces were made at the workshop of a Mr. Lethabee who had a business in the Southville/Dean Lane area. Most of it was still in good use when my mother died in 1963. 'Built-in obsolescence' was an idea unheard of in those days.

Elsie Bishop's last place of 'service' before her marriage was with the Cordeaux family who built and opened the store which is now 'Brights' of Queens Road, Clifton. The ground and I think the second floors were used as a shop. The Cordeaux family lived on the next floor and the servants quarters were at the top of the present building. The three Mr. Cordeaux were all bachelors and the household was run by a housekeeper. My mother was chief dining-room maid and her friend Miss Burrows was now a cook. Later the business opened a new shop at Queen Victoria Street, Clifton, and I believe the owners also moved house. My mother and her friend were sent to the new premises to prepare for the move and she remained in this employment until her wedding. The staff all wore brown holland frocks full length, with white starched aprons and cuffs.

For her wedding in 1911, Elsie Bishop wore a dove grey silk dress, the bodice cut low and square with embroidery around the neckline and at the elbow-length sleeve edges. Under this a white lace silk blouse with full length sleeves and a high neckline. Her hat was a big picture affair with much veiling and was a gift from her employers. Before the great day she was invited to go down to the millinery department after the shop was closed. There the head buyer offered her any choice

from the stock, and Elsie felt very grand being allowed to choose her wedding hat like any of the wealthy ladies of Clifton. They lived in Hotwells for another fifteen years, but three months after my birth in 1926 we moved to Bedminster Down. Living in Cheddar Grove, we were one of the first families on the then new estate and to me, of course, Bedminster Down was home.

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ARCHAEOLOGY IN AVON 1979

Compiled by Rob Iles

The last year of the 70's saw two important landmarks in the publication of Avon's archaeology. The first is a report on excavations in Bath 1950-1975; its appearance coincided with the excavation of spectacular finds in the Sacred Spring under the Kings Bath. The second is a monograph, in a series published by Bristol City Museum, on Rescue Archaeology in the Bristol Region.

It is ten years since Bristol Archaeological Research Group initiated its programme of parish surveys. So far they have managed to publish, on average, just over one parish a year including the latest for Flax Bourton by Michael Glasson. From the beginning the success of local parish surveys has been due largely to behind-the-scenes work by Frances Neale. The recent upsurge in the number of current parish surveys is a result of the enthusiasm of the present organiser, Mary Campbell.

The following notes on recent archaeological work and discoveries is arranged by period and then by parish. The last section is devoted to vernacular architecture. Further information on many of these items is kept with Avon Sites and Monuments Record in the County Planning Department. I acknowledge my thanks to all contributors and everyone who has provided information for the Sites and Monuments Record in the past year.

Abbreviations

BAT Bath Archaeological Trust
BRSMG Bristol Museum documentation code
RCHM Royal Commission on Historical Monuments

PREHISTORIC

ACTON TURVILLE ST809799. At least four ring ditches have been located from 1946 air photographs. R. Iles.

BANWELL Banwell Camp ST410590. Two enclosures within this 20 acre hillfort, first recognised on Avon (1975) air photographs, have been surveyed by R. Iles and B. Sutcliff. The smaller enclosure occupies about 7 acres in the centre of the hill; the other one cuts off the north west corner of the hillfort.

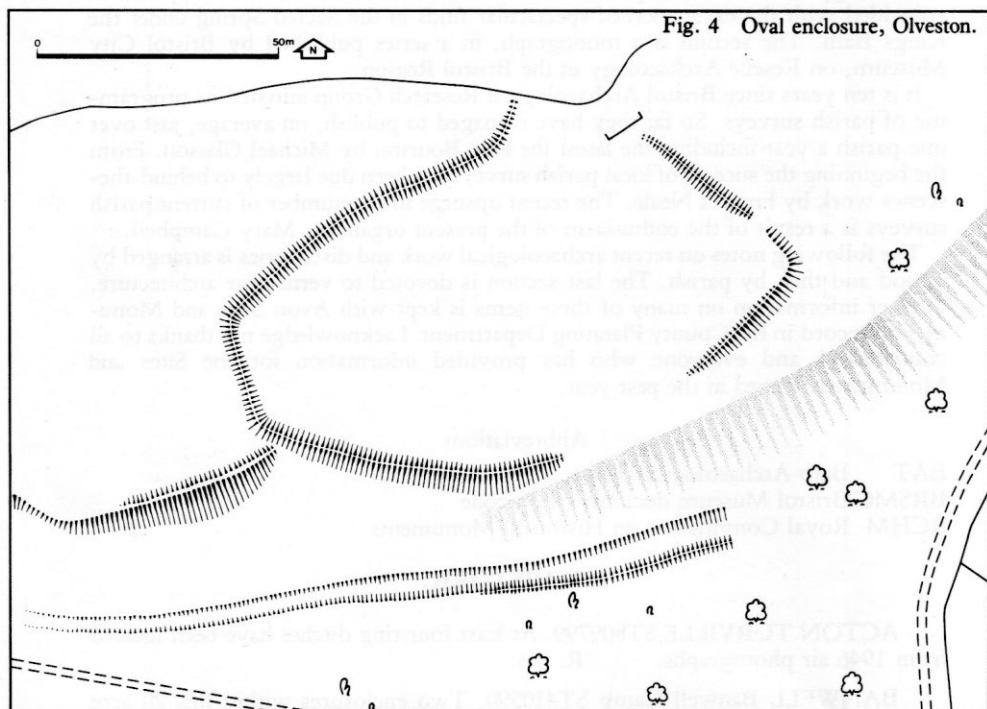
BATHAMPTON ST779741. Part of an oval enclosure, 60m diameter, exists on the north side of road close to a stile. Nothing is visible on the south side of road. R. Iles.

LONG ASHTON Ashton Park ST5572. The extensive 'celtic' field system, sketch surveyed by C.W. Philips, has been recorded by measured survey by R. Iles, N. Clough and J. Russell. Survey of earthworks in the lower part of the park continues.

OLDBURY-ON-SEVERN Oldbury Camp ST612928. Excavation in the ditch between the ramparts close to the 1978 excavation produced a large quantity of medieval pottery and more grey black sherds of uncertain date, but possibly Iron Age. R. Howell.

OLVESTON ST624877. The oval enclosure (Fig. 4) on Stroud Common, discovered by T.W. Solley, has been surveyed by him, R. Howell and R. Iles. It measures circa 100m x 60m with a steep slope on the south side; the bank is

generally only 0.5 — 1m high. The out-turned entrance on the north side is possibly the end of an avenue, making it a 'banjo' type enclosure, but there is no trace in the field to the north which is ploughed. There are also several lynchets on Stroud Common (not shown on plan) which may be the remains of a field system; to the south is a holloway probably connected with quarrying.



TORMARTON ST790789. There are several ring ditches visible on 1946 air photographs in a field now covered by M4 motorway. R. Iles.

WESTON SUPER MARE ST6235. A bronze flat axe found some years ago in a Worle garden was recently sold.

WICKWAR ST71728780. A long mound partly overlain by a stone wall may be the remains of a long barrow. R. Howell.

ROMANO-BRITISH

BATH, Roman Baths. A rescue excavation of the Roman Reservoir and Sacred Springs under the King's Bath was directed by B. Cunliffe for BAT. The excavations revealed an Iron Age wall adjacent to the main spring, extensive Roman piling on which the Roman floor and Reservoir walls were built and remains of a barrel vaulted brick roof which appears to have been built over the spring in the late Roman period. In addition, approximately 6,000 Roman coins have been discovered, together with a large number of lead courses, pewter vessels and Roman plumbing fittings. Also a number of Iron Age coins have been discovered together with items of Roman jewellery.

BRISTOL Sea Mills ST549757. Two Roman coins, one identifiable as Claudius Gothicus (268-270), were found on allotments near Sea Mills Station by D.J. Patten.

CHARLCOMBE Lansdown ST723702. Eight Roman coins, two identifiable to Constantine I and Arcadius, were brought in to Bristol Museum for identification by Mrs. O. Shotton.

CHURCHILL ST4659. At Springhead Farm, Upper Langford, several items of Roman material were found about 1967 including sherds, a glass bottle, a bronze bracelet and a tuiere.

DYRHAM AND HINTON ST718772. A probable Roman settlement has been located in fields called Chestles, north west of Lower Field Farm. Finds from the area include Samian and Black burnished ware, cooking pot, bronze brooch and spatula as well as some medieval sherds. L. Manley.

HUTTON ST339587. A Roman bronze coin (286-308) was found in the garden of 11 Woodside Avenue by Mr. F.C. Cloyne; to the south a cobbled trackway with Roman pottery has been located in building development. H. Coward.

KINGSWOOD. A Roman coin has been found in the garden of 6 Court Road by P. Best.

LOCKING. Roman coin (Constantine the Great 306-307) found in garden of Harrage House, Elm Grove, close to the find-spot of other unpublished Roman material.

LONG ASHTON ST554696. Roman pottery has been found near Yanley Lane by A. Davies. BRSMG 31/1978.

OLDBURY ST601934. An extensive scatter of large and unabraded Roman-British pottery has been found along the high water mark of the Severn bank. M. Green

STOKE GIFFORD ST617800. A third season of excavation of the Romano-British farmstead by Bristol University Archaeology Department exposed fully structures located in 1978. Subsequent salvage excavation by members of Bristol Archaeological Research Group revealed enclosure walls and a stone drain in north east part of site, a possible second circular stone structure and, across the brook, a wall bounding a yard on road. A.J. Parker.

TICKENHAM ST44427218. A small cave first excavated in 1923, has been re-examined by Clevedon and District Archaeology Society. A trench was dug to a depth of 1.5m through loose rubble. Bedrock was not reached and instability of the trench sides prevented further progress. The finds were unstratified and comprised 30 sherds of 3rd — 4th century pottery.

TYTHERINGTON Stidcot ST681885. A local tradition of Roman remains in this area seem to be confirmed by finds of Roman pottery and a number of quernstones. R. Howell.

WHITCHURCH ST606673. A brass *Sestertius* of Trojan was found during Lyons Court Farm development. BRSMG 37/1979.

WICKWAR ST701878. A scatter of Romano British pottery was found in a ploughed field south of Endland's Farm. R. Howell.

WINScombe ST397567. A Roman burial in a wooden coffin was dug up at Whitehorn Cottage, Barton, in March 1973.

MEDIEVAL AND LATER

ALMONDSBURY AND PILNING. About a dozen enclosures surrounded by ridge and furrow have been discovered in the low lying levels of these two parishes from air photographs taken 1945-50. Over half of them have since been destroyed or infilled. They probably represented deserted medieval or later farmsteads. R. Iles.

BANWELL ST389587. A medieval bronze heraldic pendant, from horse trapping, found on Banwell Hill. The crude design is probably of a suspended sheep. The enamel inlay is missing.

BATH Orange Grove. An excavation within the roundabout was directed by Tim O'Leary for BAT; this area is one of the few parts of Bath not disturbed by cellars. The east end of the Norman Cathedral was located which proved to be of apse and ambulatory plan. Part of it was retained into the 16th century. A resurvey was also undertaken of the extant Norman remains.

BRISTOL Charlton ST579799. The small village of Charlton usually thought of as an example of modern desertion (destroyed 1946 for Filton airfield extension) had probably shrunk many centuries ago. There are earthwork remains south of the runway. R. Iles.

ST570798. Either side of the A4108, north of the railway, are slight earthworks of a possible deserted hamlet. R. Iles.

Tower Lane. Excavations directed by E. Boore for Bristol Museum started late 1979 and are continuing into 1980. Two medieval stone structures have already been located.

HAWKESBURY Hillesley ringwork ST767896. Salvage excavation of this ringwork showed that the original defensive enclosure was associated with Saxo-Norman pottery. In the 12-14th Century the rampart was rebuilt with a revetting wall and a very deep external ditch was dug. In the latter medieval period the site was used for farm and domestic buildings. B. Williams and R. Iles.

HORTON ST765850. A survey of the area around Horton Court has been completed. Amongst items recorded are house platforms, numerous holloways, deer park pale, garden remains, four fishponds, six pillowmounds and strip lynchets. R. Iles.

KEYNSHAM Keynsham Abbey ST655688. Excavations continued on behalf of Folk House Archaeological Society. There are two areas currently under investigation: around the southern end of the Chapter house and the south wall of the nave. The site is prolific in finds including carved stone work, medieval glass, and filigree. B. Lowe.

LONG ASHTON ST566707, 557696. Two late medieval uniface tokens found by D. Wraight. BRSMG 87/1978, 4/1979.

LOXTON Christon ST378576. The deserted settlement remains (Fig. 5), north of Christon hamlet, have been surveyed. They lie on one side of a hollow way, rising up the south facing slope, on its east and north sides. The lower part to the east of track consists of 4 closes terraced into the hillside and has little trace of

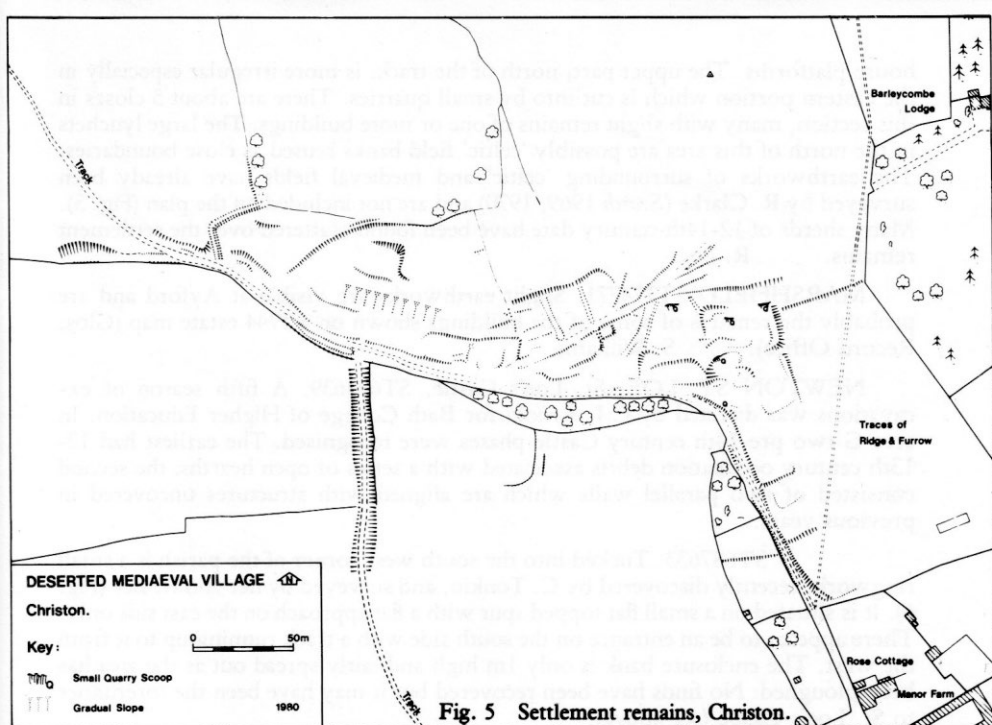


Fig. 5 Settlement remains, Christon.

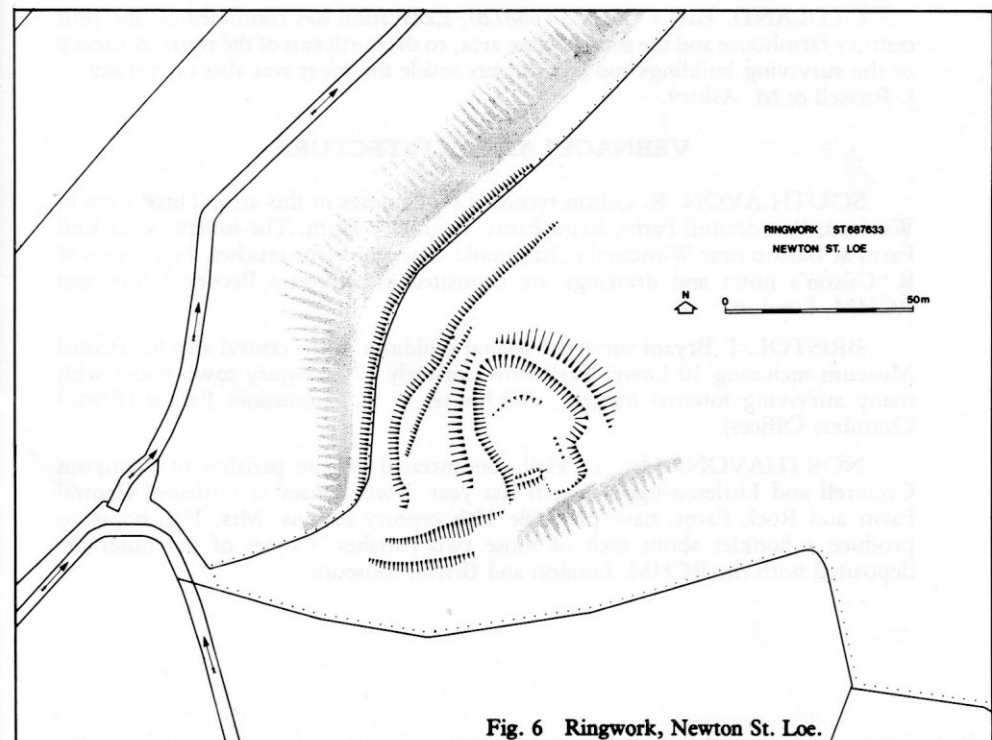


Fig. 6 Ringwork, Newton St. Loe.

house platforms. The upper part, north of the track, is more irregular especially in the eastern portion which is cut into by small quarries. There are about 5 closes in this section, many with slight remains of one or more buildings. The large lynchets in the north of this area are possibly 'celtic' field banks reused as close boundaries. The earthworks of surrounding 'celtic' and medieval fields have already been surveyed by R. Clarke (*Search* 1969, 1970) and are not included on the plan (Fig. 5). Many sherds of 12-14th century date have been found scattered over the settlement remains. R. Iles.

MARSHFIELD ST774771. Slight earthworks are visible at Ayford and are probably the remains of some of the buildings shown on a 1744 estate map (Glos. Record Office). S. Williams.

NEWTON ST. LOE. St. Loe's Castle. ST694639. A fifth season of excavations was directed by C.J. Arnold for Bath College of Higher Education. In area G two pre-14th century Castle phases were recognised. The earliest had 12-13th century occupation debris associated with a series of open hearths; the second consisted of two parallel walls which are aligned with structures uncovered in previous years.

ST687633. Tucked into the south west corner of the parish is a small ringwork, recently discovered by C. Tonkin, and surveyed by her and R. Iles (Fig. 6). It is situated on a small flat topped spur with a flat approach on the east side only. There appears to be an entrance on the south side with a track running up to it from the west. The enclosure bank is only 1m high and fairly spread out as the area has been ploughed. No finds have been recovered but it may have been the forerunner to St. Loe's Castle (see above).

OLDLAND. Barr's Court ST658720. Excavation has continued on the 18th century farmhouse and the surrounding area, to the north east of the moat. A survey of the surviving buildings and parchments inside the moat was also carried out. J. Russell & M. Ashley.

VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

SOUTH AVON. R. Gilson recorded four houses in this area. Three were in Winford; Powdermill Farm, Regil Farm, Regilbury Farm. The fourth, West End Farm at Barton near Winscombe, has smoke blackened true cruches. Full copies of R. Gilson's notes and drawings are deposited in Somerset Record Office and RCHM, London.

BRISTOL. J. Bryant surveyed several buildings in the central area for Bristol Museum including 10 Lower Park Row, an early 17th century town house with many surviving internal features, and houses in St. Augustines Parade (Bristol Omnibus Offices).

NORTHAVON. Mrs. L. Hall concentrated on the parishes of Frampton Cotterell and Littleton-upon-Severn last year. Two houses in Littleton, Central Farm and Rock Farm, have probable 15th century origins. Mrs. Hall hopes to produce a booklet about each of those two parishes. Copies of her notes are deposited with the RCHM, London and Bristol Museum.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW LOCAL HISTORY 1979

This Committee was set up under the Chairmanship of Lord Blake, the Provost of the Queen's College, Oxford, in 1977 'to make an assessment of the pattern of interest, activity and of study, in local history in England and Wales; and to make recommendations for meeting any needs revealed by amateur and professional local historians for support and services'. The Committee received evidence from a vast number of local history societies and other interested groups, as well as from many individuals, all of whom are listed in an Appendix. The Report makes interesting reading for anyone who is concerned with any aspect of local history. As might be expected, not everyone will agree with all of the conclusions or the recommendations of the Committee and many will question some of its statements, but all will find the subject considered and its future development interestingly discussed by a group of independent observers.

The Report attempts, somewhat lamely to define local history, and considers the manifold reasons for the massive growth in the subject during the last few decades, a growth reflected in the phenomenal increase in the number of local history societies. It also lays stress on the value of the subject, on its educational, social and recreational role, 'An understanding of the history of a locality gives people a sense of roots, identity and individuality'. It suggests that 'Local History offers people a process of discovery; it gives them an opportunity to work towards the discipline required to collect and analyse information and material so as to offer an interpretation of its meaning'. There is much interesting consideration of the work and potential of local history societies, of adult education bodies such as University Extra-Mural Departments, and of the part which local history might play in the school curriculum and in examinations.

For most people the most interesting part of the Report will be the sections which discuss the difficulties faced by local historians, both individual and corporate, and makes recommendations for changes. Amongst the difficulties considered are many essentially practical ones such as the difficulties of access to records and source materials, high charges for photocopies in Record Offices, the shortage of sympathetic, trained advice, and the immense problems involved in the publication of the results of local history research. It is impossible in a brief compass to do justice to the approach which the Report adopts to these problems. It suggests future developments and possibilities, such as a national organisation for local history, outlines the functions which might be undertaken by county local history committees (most of these have already been implemented by A.L.H.A.), and discusses at length how the future development of the society might be financed, although here many people will feel it is over-optimistic about the possibility or desirability of public funds being available. Among its 37 main recommendations are included the founding of a national organisation to promote the study of local history, more finance for county local history committees, more courses and opportunities for training and qualifications in local history and the establishment of funds from which to finance the publication of local history.

In these difficult times it is not easy to see where such finance might be obtained, and not everyone will welcome proposals which might 'professionalise' the study of local history; one of its chief attractions for many people is the 'amateur' status which it enjoys at present. Many will warmly endorse the Committee's recommendations for extended opening hours for Libraries and Record Offices and a

moderation in the charges made for photocopies, especially at the Public Record Office. The Committee might also have added that a more efficient faster service from the P.R.O. and the British Library would be a great help. Again, however, we are not told where the additional money to pay for these improved public services is to come from. Nonetheless, in spite of the criticism which many readers will undoubtedly feel, this is a most interesting and indeed stimulating Report, and can be recommended to all who are interested in the study of local history. For an alternative view, however, and for an interesting though perhaps over-vituperative attack on the Committee's basic approach and on its conclusions, the lengthy critique of the Report in the most recent issue of *The Local Historian* (Vol. 14, Number 1, 1980, pp. 18 — 23) should also be read.

J.H. Bettey

EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY — BRISTOL BAPTIST COLLEGE 1679-1979

by Norman Moon, £3.00.

The Reverend Norman Moon is to be congratulated upon producing a history which is at once concise, helpful and interesting. The story of this theological college which has been part of the life of Bristol and the West Country for a continuous period of three hundred years and is the oldest Free Church college must command wide attention. Bristol Baptist College was founded as a direct result of a deed of gift, executed by Edward Terrill, an elder of the Broadmead Baptist Church in 1679. Terrill was concerned to ensure a supply of educated ministers in an age when the Baptist Church was an illegal body and Nonconformists were barred from entry to the English universities by an intolerant Establishment. This desire for an educated ministry was not shared by all Baptists some of whom feared that 'human learning' might inhibit the work of the Spirit. The vision of Terrill and his successors is surely vindicated within the pages of this book. By its adaptation to changing circumstances and its liberal approach to education the College has survived and prospered. In so doing it has enriched not only the Baptist Church but also the city of Bristol and beyond. It would not be inappropriate to conclude this review with those words used by Augustine Birrell (an agnostic whose Baptist upbringing always exercised some redemptive influence on him) when writing of William Blades', *The Enemies of Books*, 'an excellent volume and worthy of all commendation'.

Roy King

CHANGING BRISTOL: NEW ARCHITECTURE AND CONSERVATION, 1960 — 1980

by Tony Aldous. Redcliffe Press for the Bristol Civic Society, £1.95.

As history starts from yesterday backwards, and as all ancient buildings were once new, Tony Aldous' well edited and well illustrated selection is as much a 'must' for students of Bristol history as a book dealing with more conventionally "historic" subjects. It appeared in October of last year, being jointly sponsored by the Bristol Civic Society and the Bristol and West Building Society. It mainly deals with a selection of new buildings, but also takes account of the great wave of conservation and reconditioning which is now as important in Bristol as completely new architectural work.

Mr. Aldous starts his survey with the early 1960s. That does not, of course, mean

that nothing was built in Bristol between the end of the war and 1960. But deplorably much of what was then put up was banal in style, insensitive in scale and involved the destruction of many good historic buildings which would probably, in the present climate of architectural thinking and planning, be preserved and put to new uses. In the last twenty years Bristol, unlike Bath, has seen the completion of many buildings of excellent architectural quality. These include some, like Clifton Cathedral, the Bristol United Press building, the unique concrete shot tower, and the fitting out of St. Nicholas' church as a museum of local history and church art, which are nationally significant. Bristol is undoubtedly worth seeing both for its conservation achievements and for its showing in wholly modern building.

Mr. Aldous divides his record of the new buildings in what he calls 'a wonderful and unique city' into sections covering commercial buildings, conservation jobs (in a few cases not yet started) and infill, housing, industrial buildings, churches and schools, and finally a rather scrappy section on setting and environment. Each section well repays careful study; one must, of course, realise that no one of them is complete, and that some important jobs, under all headings, have been started since Mr. Aldous finished his text. Despite the present financial stringency, which is now delaying the start of some important conservation projects, architectural accumulation in Bristol is a continuous process and, for the pleasure of those whose vision of history is, say, pre-Edwardian, will still include the filling of some historic sites and the renovation of some buildings much older than most of those, in various parts of the city, mentioned in this very helpful booklet.

Bryan Little

BRISTOL CURIOSITIES

by Reece Winstone and Glyn Duggan, Redcliffe Press, 1979, 90 pence

If this very interesting little booklet does not succeed in telling nearly all of its readers something about Bristol they did not know before reading it I should be very much surprised. It is written in a very attractive style, is well illustrated and is 'good value' given prevailing prices.

This kind of book, which does not aim to give a synoptic assessment of some general subject or serve as a general directory but is compiled and written both to provide adequate information on selected topics and to stimulate curiosity, can be the best kind of encouragement to the wider study of local history should it fall into the hands of a receptive purchaser. The synoptic assessment and generally satisfying precis is difficult of accomplishment and the type of book under review can be too superficially put together. This one is to be recommended as something not to be missed by anyone who takes a delight in Bristol and finds pleasure in adding to their knowledge of the city by rambling around it.

C.J. Spittal

AVON HERITAGE

by Dorothy Brown, Bristol Visual & Environmental Group, 1979,
350 photographs, £3.00.

This is the first in what is hoped to be a series on the new county of Avon. It is well illustrated, but I found the photographs rather small and the authoress' way of leading the reader to identify the pictures is, to say the least, difficult. It is a pity as the conception of the book has much to commend it to those interested in architecture, history and the local environs of Bristol. I was sorry to find some of the historical dates and details incorrect, but, the authoress does apologise for its shortcomings.

As a book for those new to Bristol who wish to explore the wealth of beauty which lies only a short distance from the City centre, it is a good appetiser.

Roger Angerson.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

BRISTOL INNS & ALEHOUSES IN THE MID EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

edited by Patrick McGrath and Mary Williams, published by the City of Bristol and available from the Record Office.

POUNDS OR PINFOLDS, AND LOCKUPS *beast and man in custody* by
B.M.W. Dobbie, University of Bath Press.

These will be reviewed in Issue Number Three.

BRISTOL MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY TWO NEW PUBLICATIONS:

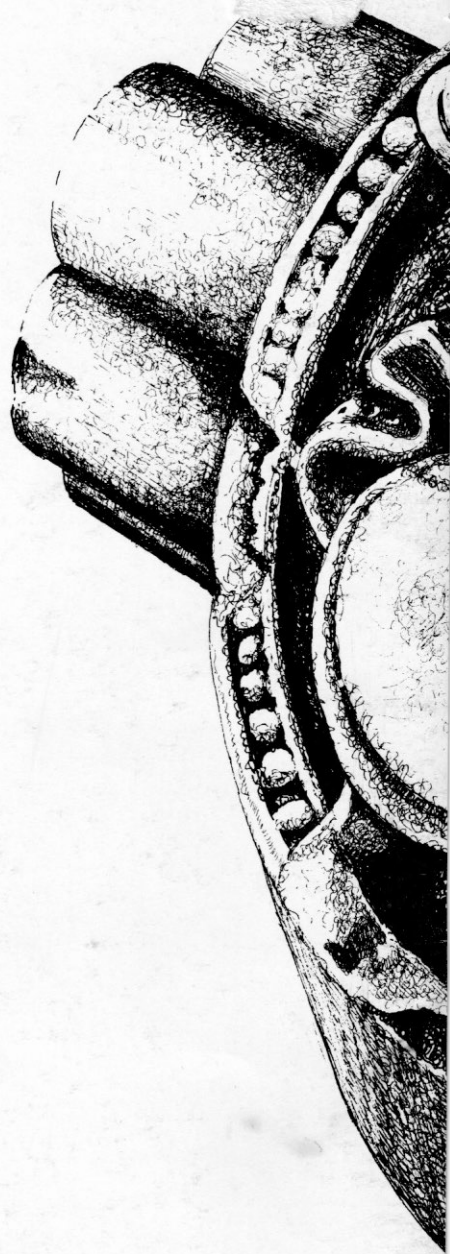
RESCUE ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE BRISTOL AREA: 1, Roman, medieval and later research organised by the City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. Includes: "A Romano-British relief from Cadbury Camp, Tickenham (Avon)" by Ian Burrow and Julian Bennet; "Human remains from a sub-Roman cemetery at Station Road, Portishead (Avon)" by Juliet Rogers; "Excavations at the Town Wall, 65 Baldwin Street, Bristol, 1974" by Roger Price; "An Excavation at Bristol Bridge, Bristol, 1975" by Roger Price; "Survey and excavations near St. Peter's Churchyard, Bristol, 1975" by Roger Price; "A bearded face-jug from Wedmore (Somerset) and anthropomorphic Medieval vessels from Bristol" by Michael Ponsford; "Notes concerning Medieval Bristol potters" by Roger Price; "Late Medieval floor tiles from Acton Court, Iron Acton (Avon), 1974" by Bruce Williams; "A survey of St. John the Baptist Churchyard, Bedminster, Bristol" by David Dawson.

£4.95 plus p. & p.

THE RURAL HOUSES OF NORTH AVON AND SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE 1400-1720 Linda J. Hall

A comprehensive and fully illustrated study of the disappearing older historic homes in the Vale of Berkeley. Structure and layout are examined in great detail, also the relationship of the buildings to the changing social and economic life of the area.

Available for the pre-publication subscription price of £8.00 plus 99p for postage and packing (please state if, and how, you would like your name printed in the list of subscribers).



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